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extended

The magazine of the OS/2 community

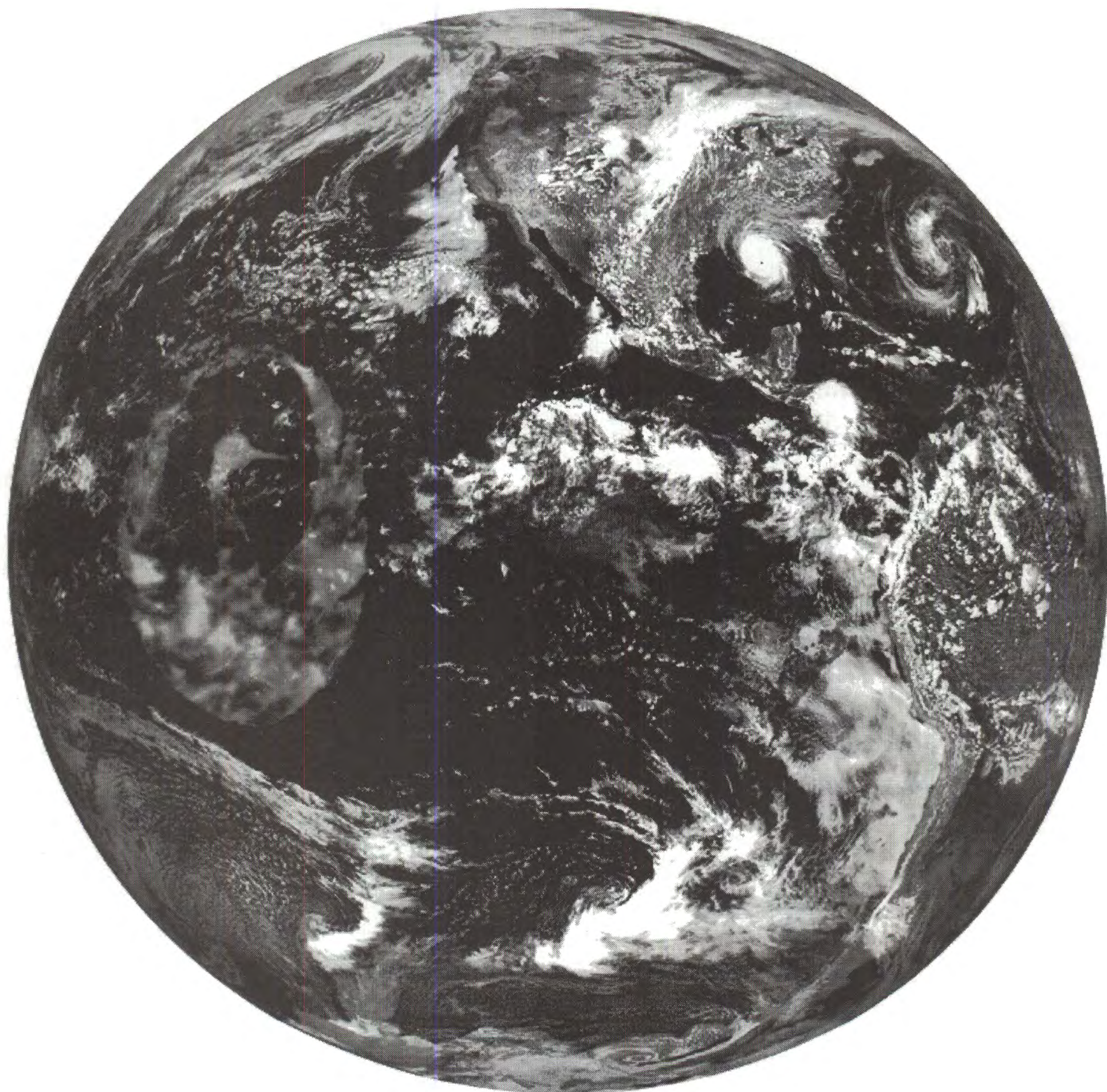
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Cover concept and artwork by Bill Schindler.

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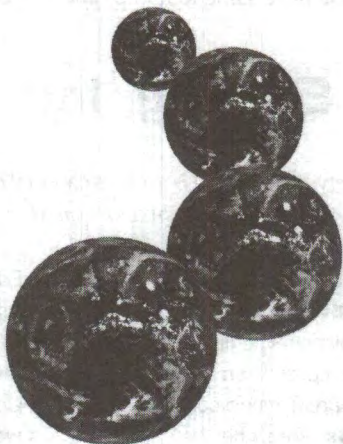
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extended attributes is the award winning monthly magazine of the Phoenix OS/2 Society, Inc.

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How to be rich and famous

A call for volunteers

by Bill Schindler, Editor-in-chief

.comment

You probably know that *extended attributes* is an all-volunteer operation. No one is paid for writing, editing, or layout. Indeed, it's the other way around—all of our volunteers are paying members of the Phoenix OS/2 Society.

As in most volunteer organizations, a handful of volunteers carry the majority of the workload. But the Society has done a remarkable job in trying to keep the load spread around as much as possible. In fact, that's one of the reasons the Society continues to be successful.

In order to keep the workload spread around, I'm asking for your help. I'm mostly looking for new writers on a variety of topics. But we could also use some helpers in the administrative area, too.

If you've considered writing but decided that you aren't good enough, please rethink your decision! We edit and polish so that your article reads well and communicates. If you're completely lost, we can even give you some guidance to get you started. And if you have dreams of becoming a professional writer some day, writing for *extended attributes* is a great way to develop the skills you'll need. (Just ask Craig, Esther, or me how we got started.)

- Software and hardware reviews. Are you using software or hardware that you really like (or really hate)? Is there some piece of software that you've really wanted to try out? Get in touch with Craig at reviews@possi.org and tell him you want to review something.
- Programming articles. Do you have some REXX tips and

tricks? Would you like to help people get started writing in Java or NetRexx? Is there some other programming issue that you'd like to write about? Email me at editor@possi.org.

- Tips and tricks. We always have room for more tips and tricks about using OS/2 and OS/2 software. You don't need to write a full article if all you have is a one or two paragraph tip. Just email me your tip. Once we've collected a few, we'll print them. If you want to write a whole article of tips and tricks, that's great, too!
- Other how-to or technically "meaty" articles. We're also interested in any articles that get into the "guts" of OS/2. If you have an idea, write me and we'll work with you to turn your idea into an article.
- OS/2 community news.

One of the things we do *not* need are advocacy or opinion pieces.

On the administrative side, we could use someone to help out with advertising, mostly in contacting potential advertisers. (If we get more advertisers, we can make the magazine bigger!)

If you're interested in getting involved in editing, layout, or artwork, please don't hesitate to contact me!

Getting involved in any of these volunteer jobs may garner only a little fame and no financial riches. But they'll definitely gain you some knowledge and a wealth of thank you's. ☺

Phoenix OS/2 Society, Inc

The Phoenix OS/2 Society, Inc (POSSI) is an international organization of computer users with an interest in IBM's OS/2 operating system and related issues.

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KVM computer switch

Secret weapon for small offices

by Ken Fermoye

.review

For some time I have advised friends, relatives and readers not to get rid of an old computer when they buy a new one. First, you can't get much for it, and second, it can still be a useful tool. Use the older machine for word processing or simple spread sheets, and save the new computer for applications (scanning, image editing, desktop publishing, complex games, etc.) that need more speed and memory. If you install a simple, inexpensive network (often cheaper than a tape drive) you can easily back up data from one computer to the other.

Several readers have said they would like to do just that, but complain, "We don't have room for two computers!" What they mean is that they don't have enough desk space to accommodate two keyboards, monitors and mice.

I had a similar problem in squeezing two more computers into an office measuring just 11x12.5 feet that already held two computers (both with 17-inch monitors), three printers, two scanners, a fax machine, and a Mita copier, plus shelves and bookcases. I wanted to add a new server, bring our #3 computer in from another room, and combine everything in one peer-to-peer LAN. I could fit in the #3 computer and the server tower, but there wasn't desk space for a fourth keyboard, monitor and mouse.

I knew that switches were available that allowed control of two (or more) computers from one keyboard, video display, and mouse (KVM switches), so I started checking the Web and catalogs. Belkin has been my main source of switches since I bought my first A-B switch to share a printer in 1985. I have used a variety of Belkin products, mostly switches and cables, and always found them well made and reliable. Experienced computer pros recommended Cybex KVM switches. I tried KVM switches from both firms because they offered slightly different features.

I first installed the new 2-port PS/2 KVM OmniCube switch from Belkin. It was easy to run cables from both machines to the OmniCube and from the switch to the keyboard, video, and mouse. I rigged a small shelf above my monitor to hold the OmniCube and the bass speaker of my QIC computer sound system. I say "small shelf" advisedly, as the OmniCube switch (4.75"Dx4.5"Wx1.75"H without cables) takes up little space.

Belkin claims that OmniCube's full mouse and keyboard emulation "eliminates boot-up failures," and my experience verifies that. I also like that it supports video resolutions up to 1200x1600 dpi. That can be important in some of our graphics and desktop publishing work. Also, switching from one computer to the other requires just a touch of the "Select" button on the switch's front panel.

You can also use hot-key or autoscan switching, but I prefer the simple pushbutton. A red light indicates which computer is active. Price of a 2-port PS/2 OmniCube (no AT version offered) is \$99.95; a 4-port model is \$129.99.

Next, I replaced the OmniCube with a Cybex SwitchView. Although physically larger than the Belkin switch (5"Dx8.1"Wx2.7"H), the cables plug into the rear of the SwitchView; two cables (to keyboard and mouse) plug into the front of the OmniCube. Either way works fine.

The Cybex switch works with PC/AT and PS/2 systems, VGA and SVGA video, PS/2 keyboard and PS/2 and serial mice supported through the rear of the unit. This could be important if you have an older computer with a serial mouse and newer one with PS/2 mouse. Like the OmniCube, this switch supports Microsoft's Intellimouse and 1200x1600 video resolution. A 2-port SwitchView costs \$149.99; a 4-porter is \$199.99.

Another SwitchView plus: you can work with one computer while booting up the other one. Using OmniCube, you have to switch to the second computer and wait until it boots up completely before you can use either machine.

Neither switch requires an external power supply, IRQs, drivers or other software. Installation is a simple matter of unplugging and plugging cables. Cable kits run about \$20 per set of three 6-foot cables. Each kit contains cables that run between the switch and the keyboard, video and monitor ports. You use existing cables to connect switch to keyboard, video and mouse.

Some manual KVM switches are available for less money (\$40 to \$65), but I didn't try one and don't recommend them. I wanted to be sure I had automatic mouse and keyboard emulation to eliminate boot-up and switching problems common to manual switches. I figured that not having to buy another monitor, keyboard, and mouse saved more than enough to pay for either the Belkin or Cybex switch.

Running my workstation computer and our network server from one set of controls is a snap with the OmniCube or SwitchView products. I have no hesitation in recommending either one to others with limited office space and growing computer needs. ☺

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Ken Fermoye has written some 2,500 articles for publications ranging from Playboy, PC World and Popular Science to MacWeek & Microtimes. He was cohost/producer of a radio show on computers and a partner in a DTP service bureau during the '80s. Ken's Komer articles are available free to User Group newsletters and Websites. For permission to reprint this article, contact kfermoye@earthlink.net.

Who put the lie in client?

Warning: This is a dog bites man story

by Esther Schindler

A few days before *extended attributes* went to press, the OS/2 newsgroups exploded. According to Stardock's Brad Wardell, at an IBM meeting the corporate powers-that-be decided not to produce a new IBM OS/2 Warp client ("at this time," as the lawyers taught IBM to say long ago). Furthermore, at that meeting IBM decided not to license Stardock to produce and market a new OS/2 client.

That was heavy enough news for the OS/2 community to cope with, but matters quickly became less certain. IBM insiders reported that the meeting hadn't taken place. Other IBMers said that a pre-meeting meeting *had* taken place. Contradictions abounded, leading to fingerpointing and personal attacks. It wasn't pretty.

But the discussion had the power of a car wreck. Even though you're fully aware that you're contributing to the traffic jam, you can't help but slow down to look at the mess.

I'd hoped to collect and summarize "the real story," but the deadlines for *extended attributes* are as ominous as at any other magazine. Let's see, though, if I can describe the ingredients in this very emotional stew.

Nothing's changed

Whether or not a meeting took place, whatever events may have transpired—the bottom line is that IBM has not announced a new client version of OS/2, which was last upgraded in 1996. This "news" has made many OS/2 devotees shout angrily, use naughty words that their mothers would object to, and declare that they'll consider other OS options. But it's actually a rather curious response. Why? Because *nothing has changed*.

Sure, IBM didn't say they'd do a new client. They didn't say it last week, and they didn't say it last month. IBM's stance has remained static. They've said nothing publicly, but then IBM rarely says anything publicly and does so even less often regarding OS/2.

Your computer runs OS/2 as well now as it did a week ago. Your applications continue to work. IBM hasn't changed its public policies on releasing Fixpacks. In fact, nothing about your use of OS/2 is any different than it was before this "news," unless you were wise enough to attend SCOUG's successful Warp Expo West, and you became a little more knowledgeable about the operating system.

This incident does underscore a few things about the OS/2 community, however, not all of which are especially good things. Some OS/2 users latch onto any report that sounds positive, no matter how incredible the source. For instance, some work hard to interpret IBM's "...no plans at this time..." as an intent to ship a product in 2000, not

1999. (Sorry, folks, but that phrasing just means that IBM's legal department forces them into using weasel words.)

I've seen some people grasp for straws, claiming that IBM's reticence to release a new client is because the company is cleverly waiting for the Department of Justice's case against Microsoft to finish, so as not to weaken the case against a monopoly. (Making this argument requires that they very carefully ignore IBM's willingness to support and preload Linux, which IBM is embracing as a prodigal son.)

Other OS/2 users take the "sour grapes" approach and say that they don't really need or want a new OS/2 client, because OS/2 does everything they need already. With fixpacks, they say, they've effectively had several OS upgrades for free. Why should they get on an upgrade bandwagon, like (and here they sneer) those *other* guys?

In fact, some OS/2 users have claimed that the fixpacks count as an upgrade, and anybody who says otherwise is attacking our poor benighted operating system. (The implication is that such people should be shot on sight, especially if they're journalists.)

Are Fixpacks upgrades?

I don't want to undervalue the OS/2 fixpacks, which have certainly added functionality as well as fixing bugs. I appreciate them as much as anyone, but by no means do I consider them to be equivalent to a real OS upgrade.

Here at the bit ranch, we have a 1991 Honda Prelude. In addition to fixing the few parts that broke (this car is an anti-lemon, and just turned 100,000 miles), I might have added new features. I could have installed a high end stereo, I might have replaced the seats with leather ones, I could have put in a new vrroom-vrrroom engine. (I didn't, mind you, but let's pretend I did.) Heck, I could replace the entire drive train, making the car a lot faster and better than it was when I started. But *it's still a 1991 model* and I won't get a trade-in as though it was a 1996 or a 1998 Prelude.

Is it a good car? Undoubtedly. Every so often, we contemplate buying a new vehicle, especially when the air conditioning cuts out during the hottest part of the summer... but then we think about the reliability of *this* car, that we know its few foibles ("oh, I know what *that* noise is"), and the fact that it's completely paid off. I'll keep the Prelude as long as I can, and at the moment it seems like it'll be quite a while indeed.

Similarly, OS/2 is reliable and wonderful and I have no intention of giving it up. I'm glad that IBM updates it with fixpacks, but they are *updates*, and not upgrades. Perhaps it's true that IBM could have released any one of these fix-

packs as an OS/2 4.1—and I wish they had, just for the marketing advantages. It's certainly true that I'd like a new shrinkwrap box that's nothing more than the current client OS with fixpacks already integrated, so that a new installation wouldn't require the fixpack-city exercise.

But is it a new version? No. New versions get completely new functionality. It may not be good or useful functionality, which is why Windows 98 took such criticism. But something significant and new is added, not the least of which is a marketing promise to prospective new users that *they should use this product*. IBM hasn't done that.

I understand the reasons that IBM may have for deciding not to release a new client. Those reasons may include everything from corporate embarrassment (remember, the powers-that-be really believe they gave it their best shot, and they consider that OS/2 failed) to concerns about providing support in 28 languages to a worry that a new client will muddy the IBM corporate strategy.

Reasons for a new client

Let me be clear: I'd like a new client version of OS/2. At a minimum, I'd like to see a version that rolled all the fixpacks onto one CD, so I wouldn't have to search my desk to find all the components necessary to install a new system.

Here's a few of the reasons I'd like to see a new OS/2 client—from any vendor.

A new client (whether from IBM or a third party) will get press. It would raise the visibility of the operating system again, at a time when computer users are once again considering alternatives.

A new client—and the resulting media coverage—would help OS/2 software vendors sell new and upgraded applications, because it would be a clear statement that OS/2 has a viable commercial future.

Every OS/2 software developer I know is suffering, right now. While there are plenty of people who love OS/2 and the applica-

tions they own, many wonder, "How much of a financial investment do I want to make in new applications for this platform?" This isn't a matter of interest only to those who sell OS/2 desktop applications, but the lack of an updated client makes it ever-harder for OS/2 solution providers and vertical application builders to answer the inevitable question, "OS/2? Didn't IBM drop that years ago?"

A new client would presumably make the OS easier to install, without Fixpack City. I wouldn't have to search the Web for drivers; they'd be right there on the CD-ROM.

A new client would sell more copies of Warp Server; client and server sales go hand in hand.

A new client might include new features. You might think, "What new features? I have everything I need now!" but innovators don't rely on what people say they want. Nobody shouted, "I must have a handheld computer or I shall surely die!" yet millions of people snarfed up PalmPilots because they solved a need *they didn't know they had*. What could a clever OS/2 developer add to the operating system to make it even better? I don't know... but I'd like to find out. ☺

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SUNshine makes me happy

What does Sun's StarDivision purchas mean to OS/2 users?

by David Both

Sun Microsystems' purchase of StarDivision has made me very happy. It's introduced an interesting new twist to the platform wars.

That's what we have now: a platform war, rather than an OS war.

Old adages die hard

I used to believe that you get what you pay for. In the computing industry, this adage no longer seems to be true. Now that Sun is giving away StarOffice on all platforms to all users.

I installed StarOffice 5.0 a few months ago, but I never used it very much. In the last couple days, I downloaded and installed StarOffice 5.1 on OS/2 Warp 4, Linux, and NT systems. I also installed the complete Lotus SmartSuite for OS/2, a few weeks ago.

I like SmartSuite. But I find that StarOffice 5.1 is much better integrated with both its own components and with the desktop environment on which it is running. StarOffice also provides a better set of import and export filters for Microsoft files. When Sun makes the conversion to XML file formats, the issue of file compatibility will just disappear.

Increasingly, the hardware and software desktop is becoming irrelevant. The desktop is dead. Long live the desktop!

Don't shoot me, but I did tell you something like this a year or so ago. Excuse me while I look it up... ah, yes, *extended attributes*, November, 1997 and March, 1998. I said then that the new ISPs would provide not just connection services and email, but also complete outsourcing services and applications for small businesses.

Application portal

Sun also announced the imminent arrival of a portal service for StarOffice applications. Users who want to write a letter or create a spreadsheet will be able to log on to the portal site and use StarOffice productivity tools. The application access is a value added service provided by your ISP.

All that software you get for "free" on the computer you purchase at Best Buy will soon be given away on the Internet. I see nothing new in giving software away. What is new is that you don't even have to buy a standard personal computer to do it. Anything you can connect to the Internet—a Palm Pilot, a Web TV, anything at all—will be able to access these applications. This moves the responsibility for maintaining the hardware and software from the end user to the ISP, where it should be.

Let's face it. The average user doesn't care about anything but accomplishing a particular task. All my wife cares

about is creating or reviewing a document, or sending an email. She doesn't care what version, revision level, or BIOS level is installed, nor should she have to care.

Even data backup is made easier. Users don't have to do it any more. It is all taken care of, with far better methods and procedures, than any of us can afford to think about. The ISP simply makes a backup each day and sends it off site to a climate controlled, disaster proof vault.

I make backups regularly... oh, all right, irregularly... but I do make them. For a while, I even had my wife take the newest set to work with her, in case the house burned down. But even the best intentions get waylaid, and the hassle overcomes the remembrance of the your struggles the last time you needed to restore from a backup. At some point in time, just when you need that very important file, the gremlins led by Mr. Murphy invade your system and ensure that your next few hours will be very interesting.

With this new environment, all of that goes away.

All silver lining?

A small dark cloud is in the center of all that silver lining. The weak link is the availability of the portal. If you lose the communications link, you lose all of your productivity. If the link is too slow, you also lose productivity.

This is where the ISPs can make their money. Selling communications links is, after all, what ISPs do! I am sure that they will be glad to provide you with OC3 right to your door, and a backup satellite link, with a copper pair as a last resort. And wireless is on the way!

Don't think I am being sarcastic or facetious. I am not. I really think this is the future of computing for home users, as well as for small to medium businesses. I also think that the good far outweighs the bad.

Unless you are a computer nerd like me. I will have to build my computers from piece parts because I won't be able to buy anything resembling a real computer anymore. The stores that now sell computers will sell these new computing appliances (thin clients, really) and there won't be anything for me to tinker with anymore.

You and I will just have to suffer along with "real" computers and operating systems like OS/2.

In the works

A few days—hours really—after Sun announced their deal with StarDivision, Microsoft announced an Office portal. They have supposedly been working on this for years. Perhaps they have. I doubt it, though.

The next few months will be interesting. ☺

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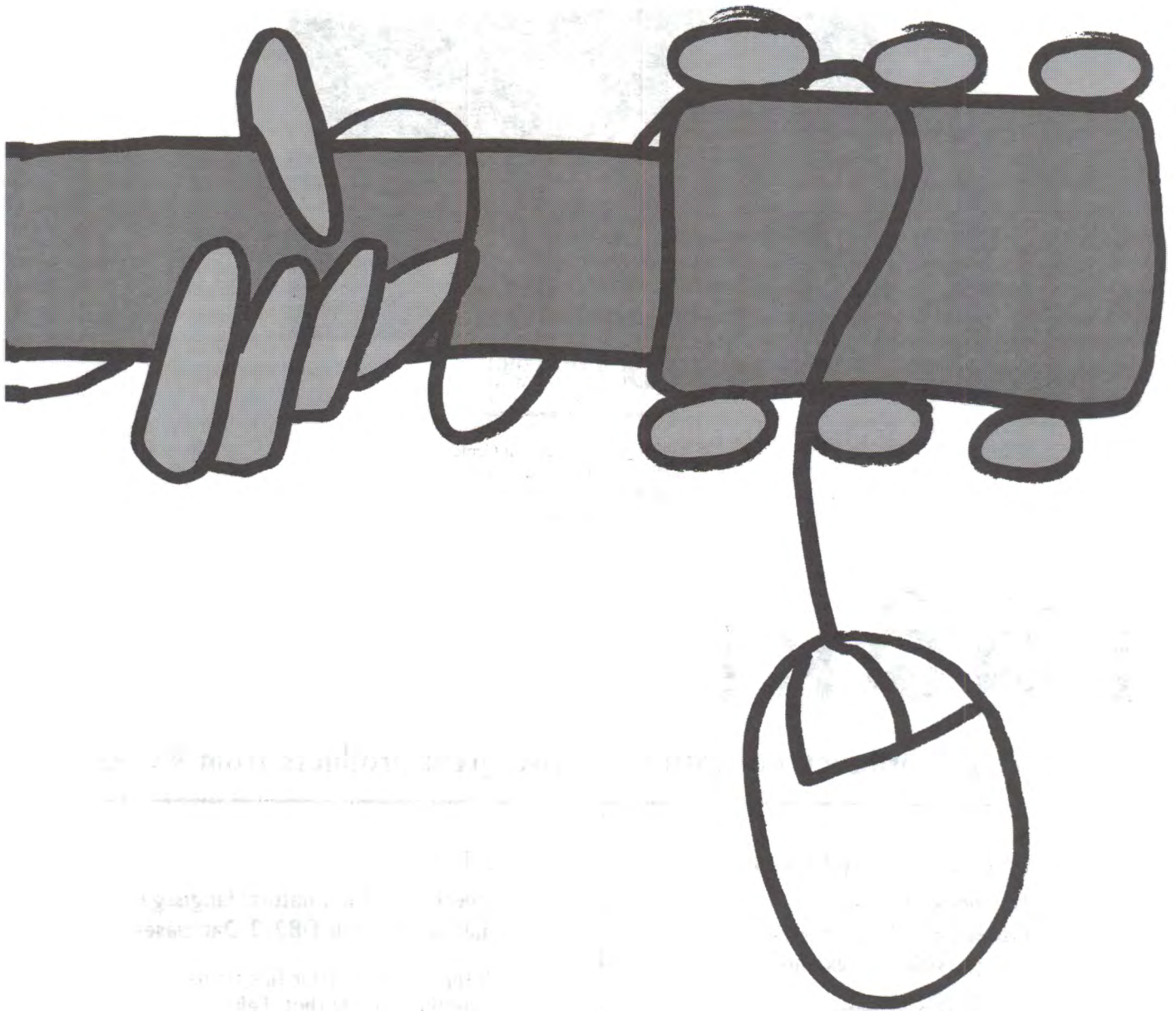
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Norman Virus Control group buy

by Rick Blankenbaker

Norman Data Defense Systems has extended an offer to the Phoenix OS/2 Society to purchase copies of Norman Virus Control anti-virus software at a discount. Refer to the August issue of extended attributes for a review of this outstanding native OS/2 anti-virus solution.

Norman Virus Control for OS/2 has a single-user list price of \$80, and an annual maintenance and update fee of \$40. Ten users drops the costs to \$40/\$20, and 50 users brings the cost down to \$30/\$15. Based on responses on the POSSI discussion mailing list, we are over halfway to the 50 user discount.

The current version is 4.70 and the discount applies to the downloaded version of the product (a manual in Adobe Acrobat PDF format is available).

The order will be placed towards the end of November. Details regarding payment options are still being worked out and will be communicated via email to all potential purchasers. Product details may be found at www.norman.com.

If you are interested in taking part in this group buy, please send an email to the coordinator, Rick Blankenbaker, at rick@blankenbaker.net. Please use the word "Norman" in the subject line. Don't forget to mention the number of copies desired. ☺

Warp Expo West attendance exceeds estimates

press release

Warp Expo West, the international "Warpfest Of OS/2 Excitement" in sunny California, held court to throngs of happy OS/2 revelers on Saturday as it filled lecture halls, exhibit areas and hallways with an enthusiasm unseen in recent memory. The four lecture halls were often at capacity, the exhibitor area often mobbed.

"We had 20% more guests than anticipated," said Rollin White, Chairman of Warp Expo West. "We obviously underestimated the industry's interest in OS/2 and the number of people who would travel long distances to attend a major OS/2 function."

International guests mingled with local attendees as lecture after lecture poured forth from the auditoriums and seminar rooms.

The roundtable with Peter Coffee of *PC Week*, Esther Schindler of *Sm@rt Reseller*, and Alan Zeichick of Camden Associates had people talking for the rest of the day, discussing the panelist's comments and sharing their own personal insights.

Jerry Rash began the first of his four OS/2 multimedia lecture periods faced with an overflow crowd. Extra chairs were brought in and the audience spilled out through the doors and into the hallway, listening to his every word and vying for an occasional glimpse of the screen.

When asked during a morning pause how the show was doing for bringing in new business, Jim Williams of IBM

replied "We've already made several good contacts. Warp Expo West is about the best show we've been to."

And so it went. Guests poured in from all over the USA and from overseas as well, taking in this massive gathering of OS/2 technology, products, and information.

Lecturers held impromptu discussions in the hallways. The Warped Jeopardy! game show presentation from Sundial Systems was a combined multimedia extravaganza and stage show delight. Live video feeds were sent around the world over Internet connections. Webfoot, The Duck made an appearance.

Special exhibits lined the walls. Vendor100 was spectacular to watch as WiseManager from Serenity Systems instantly brought up icon after icon of Vendor100 software on every machine during the network bootup. Commercial-grade overhead projectors threw large images onto the auditorium screens. The OS/2 space game Stellar Frontier ran on a bank of machines.

"We've accomplished what we set out to do," continued Rollin White, "and we've again brought OS/2 knowledge and products to the community, to both current users and new users, so that OS/2 will continue to be recognized for what it is—the best desktop operating system in the world today."

Warp Expo West was held Saturday, September 18, in sunny Southern California. All the info is still at www.scoug.com/warpexpowest. ☺

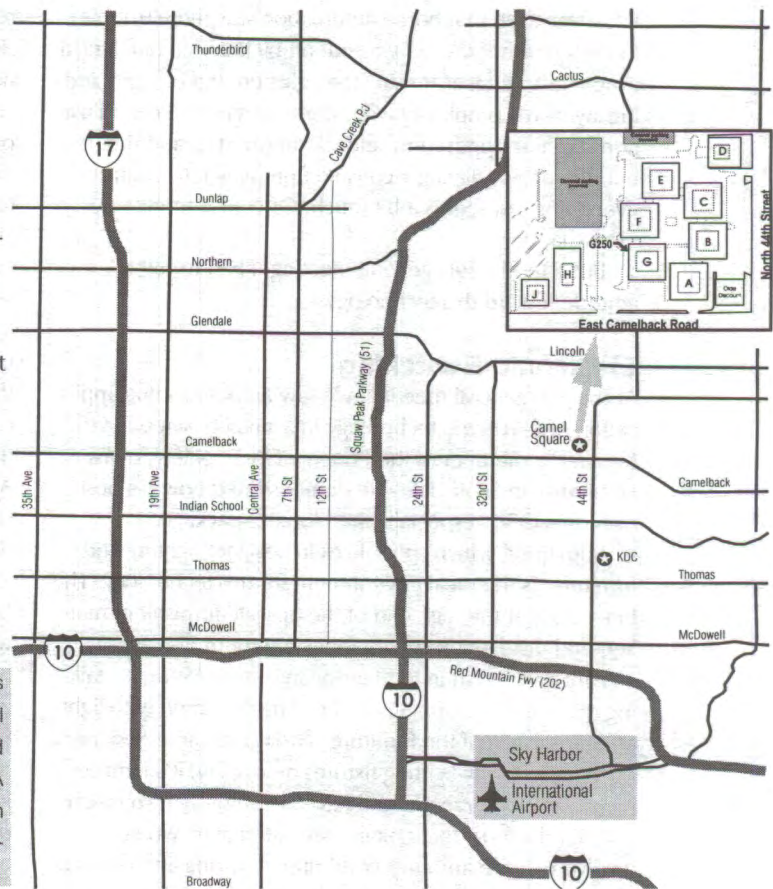
Meeting locations

Directions to meeting locations.

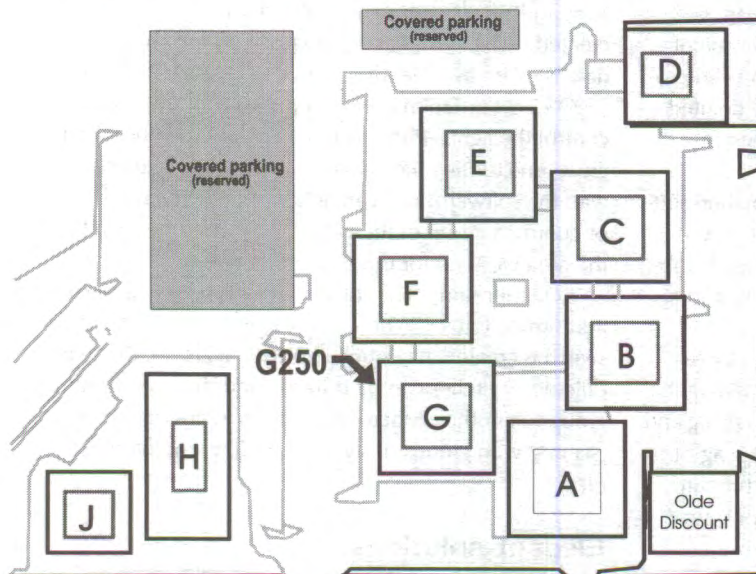
General meetings are held at the Camel Square office complex, Room G250, 44th Street and Camelback (northwest corner), Phoenix.

From the Red Mountain Freeway (202), exit at 44th Street and go north $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles. From the Squaw Peak (51), exit at Colter (southbound) or Highland (northbound); follow signs to Camelback Rd and go east $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles.

The "How OS/2 Works General Interest Group" and the Internet SIG (net.sig) meet at Knowledge Development Center, 2999 N 44th St, Suite 400. That's just north of Thomas, in the building with the green dome. Plenty of free parking is available in the garage behind the building. ☺



If the mailing label on the back cover says "sample" then this may be the only copy of *extended attributes* that you will ever receive. If you want to keep getting the magazine (and receive all the other benefits of membership), you must join! A 12 month membership in the USA is only \$30. (See the form for membership pricing in other areas.) Tear out the application, fill it in, and mail it with your membership fee today!



North 44th Street

A map of Camel Square, the new location for the Society's monthly general meeting. We will be meeting in room G250. You may park anywhere except in the reserved (covered) parking spaces.

East Camelback Road

Spotlight on OS/2

by Joel Frey

.last month

I've always felt that home automation was more trouble than it's worth. Maybe I was put off by the idea of taking a simple task, such as turning the lights on and off, and adding layers of complexity with more devices and centralization. I'm not opposed to setback thermostats and timers, but the idea of having a console from which to control everything just seems a bit much. Of course there's always "The Clapper."

But after the July general meeting, I had to rethink my attitude toward this technology.

Electronic Switching

At the July general meeting, we saw an outstanding application of X-10-type technology in a small business. Mark Kerzner, a member of the Phoenix OS/2 Society, owns Lumature, in Scottsdale. He demonstrated how his business uses OS/2, especially the Home/2 package.

Lumature, which specializes in designer lighting and furniture, is the ideal environment for this technology. The business is at the high end of the upscale furnishings market, and the 12,000 square foot showroom displays are elegant and stylish in the European sense. We're not talking rows of Barcaloungers or a ceiling crammed with lights and fans. Most of the furniture is from big name designers.

With so many lighting fixtures on display, it's hard to imagine how Kerzner could have accomplished so much without the X-10 technology. Any alternative would involve massive amounts of additional wiring and banks of controls. The simplicity of touch-screen controls, that can be configured at will, is pretty impressive. See Mark's description of this implementation in a previous issue of *extended attributes* for more information than I can provide here. But in his preview of this meeting, he pointed out that the approach saved the company more than \$70,000.

Lumature uses Armin Schwarz's home automation software, which is a native OS/2 application to control X10 devices. Although BMT Micro lists House/2 in the "Hobby Oriented" product category, Kerzner has adapted it to his business.

In the last twenty years, says Kerzner, he built three lighting stores. When he designed the newest building, he decided to automate control of the hundreds of ceiling and wall fixtures on display. In a lighting store, the ceiling lights are usually controlled by pull switches. Wall fixtures are usually controlled by banks of regular switches or rows of complicated relay-controlled low voltage systems. Kerzner decided to use a PLC (power-line carrier) system to control every electrical device in the building. This

requires no special or complicated wiring because control signals are sent through the live electrical wire that connects every device in the building. Every light fixture to be controlled has an "intelligent switch" mounted either in place of a wall switch, or in this store, using small modules that fit into the fixture junction boxes. The wall plug receptacle, where the table lamps plug in, are replaced with an "intelligent" receptacle.

These modules are sold at stores like Radio Shack and Home Depot, and at greatly discounted prices on the Internet. They cost from \$5 to \$20, depending on the type of load they control. Control signals are transmitted into the electrical system through a plug-in interface device connected to a PC serial port. Coded signals are sent from the PC through the interface and into the electrical system. All devices receive the signal, but only those set with the same code respond to the command, which may be on, off, dim, or bright.

There is a lot of control software for this system: Mac, DOS, and lots for Windows. (Some of the Windows software is sold with the IBM logo all over it, and bundled with IBM Aptiva computers.) With House/2, native OS/2 control was finally available.

Using House/2, you create virtual switches on your desktop. Each switch has a moving slide and display showing percent of intensity, eg. wall light 78%. You simply open the settings notebook for each switch to configure. Instead of depending on light sensors for outdoor parking lot lights and neon signs, you enter your geographic location, and sunset/sunrise are calculated. Control events are created. When you have configured all the controls the data is saved as a file, then downloaded into the interface.

OS/2 workstations, located throughout the showroom, control the lights. Phoenix OS/2 Society members had a great time turning the lights on-and-off, and experimenting with the software. You can adjust an individual light fixture or control a group of them—such as when Kerzner lit up the area we used for the general meeting.

Kerzner said, "The desktop display is very attractive and simple to use. When a new light is put on display, a switch is created and labelled. When it is sold, the switch is deleted. Switches can be dragged and dropped from one group to another. Macros can be set to create preset 'scenes' with groups of switches at different intensities, etc."

Elegant solutions

From the OS/2 network (and the workstations, which run OS/2 applications), to the sound system, and even the ceil-

ing and flooring materials, the solutions are both elegant and cost-effective.

For instance, Kerzener needed to eliminate the need for a fire-sprinkler system in the ceiling, because it would interfere with the placement of the lighting fixtures and create a risk of water damage to some very expensive inventory. Instead, he used a ceramic-foam coating on ceiling panels of three-quarter-inch plywood. The color has changed in the short time the store has been open, and developed into an interesting and unique texture, but its main characteristic is that when a piece is heated with a torch, it simply foams up instead of bursting into flame. The floors are acid-stained concrete, also made unique by the combination of stains and the method of application. In fact, the manufacturer warned against using them in combination because of the risk of unexpected chemical reaction, but this apparently wasn't discovered until after they had been applied.

Running on OS/2

Lumature runs entirely on OS/2. The desktop applications are native OS/2 programs, except for one DOS-based accounting system. The only automated systems that aren't OS/2-based are the music system and the phone system.

The original music system was a 100-disc CD player, since replaced by Muzak to provide more variety. As Mark pointed out, even with a hundred or more CD's, it gets pretty redundant on a day-to-day basis.

For the phone system, Kerzner said he went with a packaged system, including the phones, because he already had too many things to deal with in setting up the store. He's since regretted not going with a TouchVoice system. It turns out that some of the features of phone system he purchased, which was designed for the Japanese market, are incompatible with US phone standards.

A while back, a retired IBM executive came into the store as a customer. Upon seeing the Warp logo on the screen saver,

offered to send someone in to "upgrade" this obviously obsolete system to Windows. Kerzner responded that OS/2 worked great, and that he never needed any service—so why would he change? Apparently, the ex-IBM executive sighed and said something like, "Yeah, it's like that."

Given IBM's general attitude toward OS/2 over the last few years, I guess we shouldn't be surprised, but it illustrates the mentality that has caused so much grief for OS/2 users.

It was nice change to see a business that actually uses OS/2 and is happy with it. As we all know, it's a practical solution in spite of the market forces. And, if you're ever out in Scottsdale and in the market for designer lighting or furnishings, stop in at Lumature and show your support for a business that makes good all-around use of OS/2. You'll find Lumature at 15620 North Scottsdale Road. ☺

THE

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In the Driver Watch seat

New support for your OS/2 hardware

by David Wei, davidwei@cybermail.net



This month's batch of new and updated drivers features several from IBM.

Device Driver FixPak

IBM now releases its Device Driver FixPak individually, and it should be easier to update drivers when the standard FixPak for your version of OS/2 isn't available. The DDFixPak requires at least OS/2 Warp 3.0 with fixpak 32, OS/2 Warp 4.0 with fixpak 4, Workspace on Demand Release 1 with fixpak 4, or WSOD Release 2. It is available at <ftp://ftp.software.ibm.com/ps/products/os2/fixes/DDPak>.

GRADD V0.80

IBM's GRADD device drivers 0.80 is now available.

Although it adds a few new features, this driver has already been confirmed to cause a memory leak with Stardock's Object Desktop. If you use that popular desktop utility, you might want to delay your upgrade until this is fixed by either Stardock or IBM. (And note that SciTech Software's SDD/2 V7.0 Beta 6 is also based on GRADD 0.80, so you'll encounter the same problem.)

Make sure that the disk label of the GRADD V0.80 is renamed to **GRADD 1** or else the driver won't install.

You can get it at <ftp://ftp.software.ibm.com/ps/products/os2/videopak/graddbb>.

One-For-All video card driver

SciTech Software has updated its SDD/2 to use GRADD V0.80. SciTech Display Doctor beta 6 can be downloaded at www.scitechsoft.com/ftp/sdd/beta/os2/sdd-os2-7.0.0-b6.zip.

FAT32.IFS V0.90

Henk Kelder's FAT32.IFS V0.90 is released. It's useful for anyone who needs to access an FAT32 Windows 95/98 partition. Download it at www.os2ss.com/information/kelder.

Lucent's modem driver 5.55

This is the first driver for so-called "WinModems" that works in OS/2. This is especially good news, because a lot of notebooks are beginning to use software/hardware based modem instead of pure hardware modems.

Get it at ftp://hobbes.nmsu.edu/pub/incoming/1tm_5553.zip

IBM Updated USB Audio Driver

IBM updated its USB Audio Driver. It permits USB equipped speakers to produce digitized sound without

requiring a sound card. The updated driver now installs with mminstl. Note that USBASIC.EXE is required.

It's at <ftp://ftp.software.ibm.com/ps/products/os2/os2ddpak/usbaudio.exe>.

USB removable storage support

Finally, OS/2 has support for USB-based removable storage! This driver currently supports USB-based LS-120, Iomega Zip 100, and 1.44MB floppies. Support for other removable storage is not confirmed. USBASIC.EXE is required.

You can download it at <ftp://ftp.software.ibm.com/ps/products/os2/os2ddpak/usbflppy.exe>.

IBM UltraDMA/66 support

IBM added UltraDMA/66 support to its one-for-all IDE driver. Now you can use this new feature, which is just beginning to appear on new motherboards.

It is available at: <http://service.boulder.ibm.com/os2ddpak/html/76CF22F6A388FD64872567BA0070F5C2.html>.

IBM Ensoniq & Yamaha sound cards

IBM added two new sound card drivers, supporting Yamaha 724 and Ensoniq ES1371 sound chipset. Early reports about the Yamaha driver indicated that it seems to only support Revision E of the chipset. I've seen no reports about the Ensoniq ES1371.

You can download either file at: <ftp://ftp.software.ibm.com/ps/products/os2/os2ddpak/pciymf.exe>

<ftp://ftp.software.ibm.com/ps/products/os2/os2ddpak/ensoniq.exe>

IBM Omni & PostScript printer driver

IBM again updated the jack-of-all-trades Omni and PostScript driver. It doesn't seem to add any new printer support, but then again, it already supports plenty. You can download either file at: <ftp://ftp.software.ibm.com/ps/products/os2/os2ddpak/omni.exe>

<ftp://ftp.software.ibm.com/ps/products/os2/os2ddpak/pscript.exe> ☺

Installation tribulations

How installation can drive the customer away

by John Wubbel

When a developer first installs IBM development software, he often gets a bad taste from the installation program itself. IBM creates some pretty good developer toolkits and documentation, but more and more, their installations leave a bad impression.

It seems like each IBM application uses a different installation process. You'd think that, after all these years, IBM would have developed a single, common installation process.

In the early IBM PC days, programs had to be tightly coded and efficient, because memory and disk space were expensive. Today, with memory and hard drives cheap, why worry about an efficient installation process? A bloated install program is going to run and run; the hard drive will thrash and thrash. And your customers—not yet impressed with the incredible feature set because they haven't met it yet—will be left wondering what is going on, other than extracting and copying files to the hard drive.

I hope that, when you develop an application, you give some thought to the installation a customer has to endure before using your product.

A few recent examples

I recently installed the IBM Java development kit (JDK). This crazy install process requires a number of prerequisites before you can even begin to install the toolkit.

In early JDK releases, you needed the Netscape browser and the correct release of another tool called the Feature Installer. Plus, you had to be sure your OS/2 system had the right FixPak level. As we graduated from JDK versions 1.02, 1.1.4, and 1.1.6, there was always a quirk about getting the prerequisites just right.

Recently, I upgraded to JDK version 1.1.8. I wanted to remove VisualAge for Java 2.0 first, to make room for the Java JDK. I ran the uninstall for VisualAge—but it requires Netscape 4.6. Okay, so I had to download and install Netscape 4.6, in order to remove VisualAge.

The JDK installation also uses the Netscape browser. The installation is slow and requires a huge amount of resources. An install is something that is relatively simple. I mean, come on, we are not trying to install an operating system, here! I have installed Sun's JDK for Windows; the install runs, does its thing, and completes in no time flat. You can only draw the conclusion that IBM development must think the Netscape browser is the greatest multipurpose tool they ever found.

For my money, this process is overweight, risking more points of failure and higher support costs for IBM. For example, I could not install the Java JDK 1.1.8 using the

advanced route because a particular DLL in Netscape trapped. I had no choice but to use the other route, intended for users that need tutoring along the way.

It also takes longer to get a system configured. For a company that advocates rapid development of Internet and e-business applications, IBM sure keeps me from getting down to writing code. If there is anything I dislike, it's needing to run through different code paths in an install program just to find out which one runs to completion. The first time you install the OS/2 JDK 1.1.8, you can expect your install time to be almost the same for each of the Java extensions. In each case, the self-extracting install program must unpack before the installation runs.

IBM has no way to make their development groups reuse proven installation software. Each group decides on its own. Some—such as ViaVoice and the toolkits—use Install Shield. Others use home grown programs.

At one time, there was the configurable OS/2 Installation Tool. You probably have seen IBM OS/2 software products, such as DB2, use this common tool for installing software. Unfortunately, the install tool lost its owner inside IBM.

VoiceType for OS/2 v 1.1 used this tool, back in the days when VoiceType was shipped as a separate product. On some systems, the Install Tool trapped. There was no workaround, except to send the customer a refund. Since development was shut down on the installation tool, no one could access the source code, rebuild it, and deliver a fix. If I recall correctly, after Install Tool was moved from Boca to Austin, it was eventually reincarnated as SWIM/2.

Then there's other IBM groups, such as alphaWorks, speeding technology to you. Among other things, alphaWorks produced an installation toolkit. IBM's marketing pitch is how great these new installation products are for consumers—yet no one at IBM is willing to use them.

If I were new to the IBM solution developer programs, I would be very disappointed in the difficulty required to bring a development system up to speed. I might rethink my plans for long term product development. After all, our software "state of the art" has advanced enough where we should not expect such delays. It follows that, if you link your software to IBM products, these same install problems will become extra support baggage for your software.

By thinking through your installation strategy early, you will be ahead of the game years down the road as you produce new releases and gain additional market share. The kludged install process only gets worse over time. Save your customers the pain of enduring a bad install. And save yourself the expense of supporting it in the future. ☹

Key benefits

A brief summary of the Dvorak keyboard

by Rick Blankenbaker, rick@blankenbaker.net

review

Sometimes the best ideas or products languish, while inferior solutions enjoy great success. Even when the product's merits are well known, people just seem to be apathetic to the potential benefits.

No, I'm not talking about OS/2. I'm speaking of the Dvorak keyboard, which shares several traits with our preferred operating system. Not only have most people not heard of it, but, in my experience, those who do know of it and its advantages don't bother to make the move to this better alternative. I recently became a convert, after 20+ years of QWERTY, and found the experience very educating.

History

The history of the Dvorak keyboard must begin with the history of the well-known QWERTY layout. Devised by Christopher Sholes, it was designed to overcome the major problem of the primitive mechanical typewriters of the late 1800's: key jamming, caused by the slowness of the type bars to return to their home positions. As touch-typing came into use, it became apparent that the machines of the time could not keep up with even a modestly speedy typist.

So, did Sholes improve the machine? No—he slowed down the typist. Sholes performed a study to determine the most-used letters and letter combinations in English textbooks, and then scattered them as widely as possible over the keyboard. (As a side note, in a concession to marketing, Remington, manufacturer of the first commercially successful typewriter, moved the letter R from the middle to the top row, to better enable its salesmen to rapidly type the word “typewriter,” as all the letters were now in the same row). For the first seven years of its commercial life, every typewriter produced used Sholes' QWERTY layout. This was plenty of time to ensure that this became the de facto industry standard.

Enter August Dvorak. Working with his brother-in-law, he devoted nearly 20 years to studying the problem of how to type quickly and efficiently. Besides repeating Sholes work on letter and letter combinations, he studied hand physiology and functioning, even to the point of making slow-motion movies of typists in action to better examine the problem. In 1932 the Dvorak keyboard was introduced. By this time, typewriters had been refined to the point that jamming was not the bugaboo it had been in Sholes' day. However, despite studies and trials proving the superiority of the new layout, the Dvorak keyboard languished.

Economics

QWERTY's dominance guaranteed that the Dvorak keyboard would remain a curiosity, at least while mechanical typewriters ruled. It was simply too risky for a manufacturer to re-tool production for a new-fangled product that was certain to struggle in the marketplace. And struggle it would, as every typist in every office was trained on the QWERTY layout. Every typing school trained their students on QWERTY. And every office ordered QWERTY machines, since there were so many QWERTY typists available.

Enter the Computer. Although it would have been a major commitment to convert the mechanical typewriter to a different layout, the advent of the computer and word processor made this once-formidable task almost trivial. A special keyboard is not needed (although they are available). The existing keyboard is just remapped.

Even better, unlike a typewriter, the conversion is not a one-way process. A machine can be switched from QWERTY layout to Dvorak and back again, with a few key-strokes or less. I have two icons on my Warpcenter to switch to Dvorak or QWERTY layout with a single mouse-click. The Unix and Windows NT workstations that I must sometimes use at work are also easily converted to either layout, with a bit more work. This easy conversion process is very handy for multiple-user workstations, and removes the major obstacle to more widespread Dvorak adoption.

Math

So, exactly what are the benefits to using the Dvorak keyboard? Many studies have been performed over the years.

According to a Mensa bulletin from a few years ago, the QWERTY layout offers 300 words using only the letters on the home row. Dvorak provides 3000. Using a QWERTY layout, roughly 32 percent of a typist's strokes are on the home row. With Dvorak, the number is 70 percent. Right-handers should note that a QWERTY layout forces the left hand to perform 56 percent of strokes; Dvorak allocates the same percentage to the right hand. The Dvorak layout also maximizes alternating use of hands and places most-used letters under the stronger fingers, both aids to typing efficiency.

The overall result of the many Dvorak advantages is that finger travel is reported to be from one-fourth to one-twentieth that of a QWERTY keyboard, resulting in much less fatigue, and reputedly much less chance of suffering from Repetitive Stress Injury (RSI). One study, performed in the late 1930s, showed that students learned Dvorak typing in one-third the time as QWERTY. And finally, one handy ben-

efit is speed; nearly all records for speed-typing are held by Dvorak typists.

Literature

So, after all that information, what is my story? Why did I decide to go Dvorak? Well, for me, probably the biggest argument in favor of Dvorak was less stress. My job requires me to sit in front of a keyboard 4-6 hours a day. That, coupled with the time I spent typing at home, sometimes caused my wrists and hands to become quite fatigued. I had heard horror stories of carpal tunnel syndrome and other maladies, and decided to do something preemptive about the potential problem.

I will say that it was *not* easy to unlearn QWERTY after all those years. However, by sticking to a 30 minutes-a-day practice schedule over a 3-week period, I was able to function fairly well. It took me nearly 10 weeks to regain my pre-Dvorak level of performance, but I believe I could have reached this point sooner; I slacked off of my practicing somewhat once I reached a tolerable speed/accuracy level. And my wrists do feel much better.

My second reason for trying Dvorak is a more philosophical one; it just plain makes sense. As an engineer, I am always supportive of a technically better mousetrap. After all, that's why I use OS/2.

Hands on

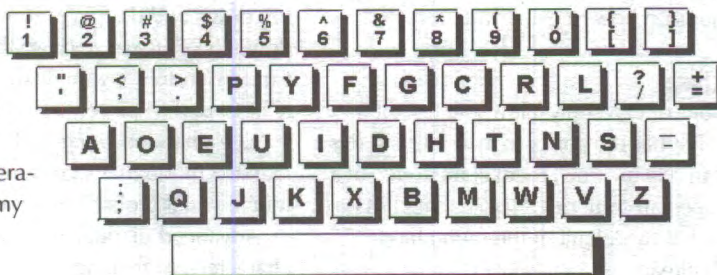
If you'd like to try the Dvorak layout yourself and you're using Warp 4, just go to the Keyboard settings in the System Setup folder. Under the "layout" page, select USA English Dvorak. Or, go to an OS/2 command prompt and type `keyb usdv` (`keyb us` will get you back). However, there is a bug in the original Warp 4 implementation of the Dvorak layout. The letters s, v, w, and z do not switch to upper-case when caps lock is activated. This has been fixed in fixpack 11.

I believe that Warp 3.0 required the use of an IBM EWS (Employee Written Software) program to convert to Dvorak. It is available on Hobbes as DVORKB.ZIP. Also note that Win-OS/2 sessions have to be switched independently in the Control Panel, in either version of Warp.

You'll find many Dvorak keyboard resources on the Web. A good place to start is Dvorak International at www.dvorakint.org. Dvorak International is a non-profit organization founded to promote usage of the Dvorak keyboard. Although the newsletters are a bit dated, many useful links are available. ☺

Rick Blankenbaker is a test engineer for Motorola. He lives with his wife and six children near Harvard, Illinois. He has used OS/2 since 1994, has been a POSSI member since April, 1997, and is looking forward to attending another Warpstock.

He can be reached at rick@blankenbaker.net.



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Enhancing your life

Making EPM work for you

by Bill Schindler

OS/2 Warp comes with a lot of tools that are mostly hidden away in the dark recesses of your boot drive. Perhaps one of the most powerful tools is the Enhanced Editor (EPM).

EPM is a text editor that consists of a core "editor engine" and a set of macros. The macros do nearly all of the work of telling EPM what to look like, what keys are bound to which functions, and what commands are available. The overall functionality of the editor can be extended, changed, and enhanced almost as far as your imagination can take it.

The problem is, EPM straight from the OS/2 install doesn't look accessible. It's not easy to figure out where to start if you want to make EPM work your way—or just make it a little friendlier.

In this article (and perhaps a couple to follow) I'll give you a roadmap to some of EPM's features. And I'll show you how to really enhance the Enhanced Editor.

In case you're still using the older EPM version 5.x—which comes with OS/2 Warp 3—I'll give directions for both versions when they operate differently. However, your best bet is to upgrade to EPM 6.03b. See the end of the article for directions on how to get EPM 6.03b.

Ring around the...

Most "raw" installations of EPM only allow you to edit a single file at a time. EPM has the ability to load lots and lots of files, so that you can edit (or view) them at the touch of a key. This feature is called an "edit ring." (Note that EPM 6.x has the edit ring enabled by default. If the menu has a "Ring" item, then it's already on.)

To enable the edit ring on EPM 5.x, from the menu choose **Options, Preferences, Ring enabled**. Save the change for later editing sessions by choosing **Options, Save options**.

Now that you have the edit ring enabled, give it a try. Press F8 to load a file into the ring. For testing, just load config.sys. Press F8 again and load autoexec.bat. You should now have three files in the edit ring: the original ".Untitled" file, config.sys, and autoexec.bat.

Try switching between files, by pressing F11 to go backwards around the ring or F12 to go forwards. You'll quickly see why it's called a ring: going in one direction cycles around and around through the list of files.

If you want to see a list of all the files loaded in the edit ring, press Ctrl+G. A dialog pops up, with a file list. Selecting a file name from the dialog instantly switches to that file.

When you're done with a file, press F3. That closes the single file that's shown in the edit window. If that file is the only one in the edit ring, then EPM will close, too.

Open source

You've already seen one way of opening files in EPM's edit ring. Here are a few more ways to open or create files.

To create a new file, press F8, then Enter on the dialog without typing in a file name. (Or type in the name of a file that doesn't exist.) With no file name, EPM creates a new, empty ".Untitled" file. Use **File, Save as...** (F2) to name and save the file. Or use F7 to rename the file.

Most EPM beginners discover that EPM's **File, Open** (Ctrl+O) is truly annoying. Each time you use that method to open a file you get a new instance of EPM, which is usually not what you want. Get in the habit of using F8, instead.

On your mark

EPM defaults to the familiar marking style found throughout OS/2, called "CUA marking." Hold the left mouse button down and drag over some text to mark it. (Or hold down the shift key and use the arrow keys.) Use Ctrl+Insert to copy the text, or Shift+Delete to cut it. Use Shift+Insert to paste.

CUA marking works well, but EPM has an advanced marking mode that's far more powerful. If you use EPM much, you'll probably want to use the advanced mode.

Advanced marking gives you the ability to mark lines, characters, or rectangular blocks. The advanced mark "sticks" so that you can scroll, type, and click elsewhere in the text without unmarking.

To enable advanced marking:

- Using EPM 5.x, from the menu select **Options, Preferences**, and then uncheck **CUA accelerators** and check **Advanced marking**.
- Using EPM 6.x, select **File, Settings....** A settings notebook appears. Select the **Misc** page (you may need to

Line marking: Move the cursor to the second line and mark the full line by pressing Alt+L. Move down a few lines and press Alt+L again. You should now have a several lines marked. Click in the text elsewhere. Type a few characters. Notice that the mark remains. Press Alt+U to unmark the lines.

Character marking: Position the cursor in the text, press Alt+Z, move the cursor and press Alt+Z again. This works like the CUA marking except that the text stays marked when you move the cursor. Press Alt+U.

Block (or column) marking: Position the cursor in the text, press Alt+B. Move down a couple lines and to the right a few characters. Press Alt+B again. Notice that a rectangle is marked with the two Alt+B locations defining two diagonal corners of the rectangle. Press Alt+U.

scroll right in the tabs). Uncheck **CUA marking** and **Menu accelerators**.

An *accelerator* is the key combination you use to select something from the menu. You need to shut off the accelerators to make the advanced marking key combinations available. Be sure to save the settings so that your changes stick.

Now you can try out the advanced marking mode. First, load a file using F8 (see above) or create a new file and type in a few lines of text. Now try a few commands:

- **Line marking:** Move the cursor to the second line and mark the full line by pressing Alt+L. Move down a few lines and press Alt+L again. You should now have several lines marked. Click in the text elsewhere. Type a few characters. Notice that the mark remains. Press Alt+U to unmark the lines.
- **Character marking:** Position the cursor in the text, press Alt+Z, move the cursor and press Alt+Z again. This works like the CUA marking except that the text stays marked when you move the cursor. Press Alt+U.
- **Block (or column) marking:** Position the cursor in the text, press Alt+B. Move down a couple lines and to the right a few characters. Press Alt+B again. Notice that a rectangle is marked with the two Alt+B locations defining two diagonal corners of the rectangle. Press Alt+U.

You can also use the mouse to mark text in advanced mode. Double-clicking in the text unmarks, the same as Alt+U. Here's how to use the mouse:

- **Line:** Point at a line of text. Press and hold the mouse's right-button and drag up and down.
- **Character:** Point at the first character you want to mark. Press and hold Ctrl+left-button and drag over the text you want to mark.
- **Block:** Point at one corner of the block you want to mark. Press and hold the left-button and drag until it covers the

area you want to mark.

Now that you know how to mark text, what can you do with it? Just about anything you might want! Here's a sampling of some of the things you can do after marking text:

- **Copy:** Move the cursor to where you want to copy text. Press Alt+C.
- **Move:** Move the cursor to where you want to move text. Press Alt+M.
- **Delete:** Press Alt+D to delete the text within the mark.
- **Shift left/right:** To shift marked text left or right, press Ctrl+F7 (left) or Ctrl+F8 (right).
- **Fill:** To fill a marked area, press Alt+F, type the character you want to use as fill and press Enter.

Keys to success

One of the questions I'm asked most about EPM is how to delete a line. Here's a quick list of some of the most-used functions and the matching keystrokes:

Table 1. Common editing functions

Clear to end of line	Ctrl+E
Close file	F3
Delete line	Ctrl+Backspace
Duplicate line	Ctrl+K
Join lines	Ctrl+J
Save and close file	F4
Save file	F2
Split line at cursor	Ctrl+S
Undo/Redo	Ctrl+U

There are lots more (see **Help, Keys help**), but that should be enough to get you started.

Shell we dance?

You can start a command line shell within an EPM window. You're somewhat limited on what you can run in the shell, but running a shell in the editor still gives you lots of power you couldn't get otherwise.

To start a command line shell, press Ctrl+I (that's an "i," not the digit "1"). This

activates EPM's command dialog. Type `shell` and press Enter.

You're now looking at a command line prompt, almost like you'd opened an OS/2 command window. The first difference you'll notice is that you can move the cursor anywhere in the window. You can also mark text, copy, paste, or perform any other editor functions that you might perform on a normal file.

At the command prompt, type `dir` and press Enter. This gives you a normal directory listing, but with one difference.

Click on a file name in the directory listing (select a text file), then press Alt+1 (that's the one key above "Q," not the one key on the numeric keypad). EPM loads the file into the edit ring.

You can get a directory listing in several directories. Then you simply point at files in each directory and press Alt+1 instead of spending time clicking around in the file dialog.

The shell is also a great way to make a quick list of files. Just block mark the files from the directory listing, switch to where you want the file listing, and copy (Alt+C) the list.

Is that all?

There's lots more to the Enhanced Editor than what I've covered here. There's plenty more functionality built into the editor. And if what's there isn't enough, there's EPM's E macro language and EPM REXX macros.

If you're still using EPM 5.x, *upgrade*. Go to Hobbes and download the EPM 6.03b package at <ftp://hobbes.nmsu.edu/pub/os2/apps/editors/epm/epmapp.zip>. EPM 6.x is faster, it looks better, and the help is light years ahead of EPM 5!

The chances are good that I'll cover a lot more EPM territory in upcoming issues of *extended attributes*. But if you can't wait, browse through EPM's help and try some of the commands. ☺

New and improved

.random bits

compiled by Esther Schindler

IBM released the new server software as OS/2 Warp Server for e-Business. But, with this latest crop of OS/2 applications, it seems as though the client version of the OS is an e-business solution as well.

A few longtime OS/2 software vendors have felt the need to drop support for their OS/2 applications. However, both of them—Innoval and TrueSpectra—have made the applications available for free to the OS/2 community.

InJoy Firewall 1.2

F/X Communications announced the third public release of InJoy Firewall.

The InJoy Firewall provides affordable gateway and firewall capability to consumers, small businesses, and large enterprises, and runs on any OS/2 computer with an Internet connection. It requires no reconfiguration of network applications, and works transparently. The protected connection can be of nearly any type, including xDSL, dedicated T1 circuits, Frame Relay, and even satellite connections. The InJoy Firewall can serve as a central VPN solution, or it can be used as a VPN client, allowing remote workers to connect to the corporate network using secure tunnels over the Internet.

This version introduces support for the interoperable IPSec (Internet Protocol Security) VPN standard, the predominant technology in Virtual Private Networks (VPNs). It provides reliable and interoperable data exchange, ensuring confidentiality, integrity, and authenticity of transmitted information. The InJoy IPSec Plugin is fully IPSec compatible, and includes software-based 128-bit 3-DES cryptography.

Find more information at www.fx.dk/firewall and www.fx.dk/ipsec.

HOUSE/290 updated

HOUSE/290 is a graphical user interface for the CP290 home automation controller from X10. This OS/2 application contains a separate, REXX-enabled and network aware Communications Engine, allowing it to extend the functionality of the CP290.

With this update, Dusk/Dawn buttons recognize when daylight savings is in effect. The Dusk/Dawn offset range has been changed. Plus, a command line parameter enables more flexible ini file handling for network operation.

The price is \$20. You can learn more at <http://home.att.net/~ASchw>.

Copy Wave

Copy Wave is a free utility from Carsten Arnold. It copies parts from an existing PCM-Wave file, starting from an indicated place in an indicated length into a new Wave file. The files can be very big. The utility is downloadable from <http://home.t-online.de/home/C.Arno1d>.

Building Automation and Security

Serenity Systems International announced an agreement with the Warped Code Cellar, publisher of HOUSE/2, Entity Systems Ltd, and Hauppauge Computer Works, to develop a new OS/2 business product.

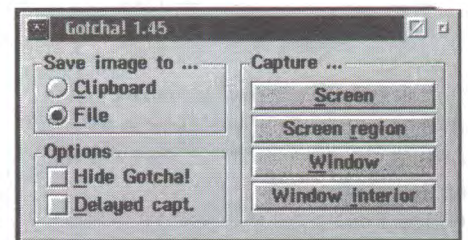
Building Automation and Security Software (BASS) will use technologies from HOUSE/2 to control electric appliances using X10 controllers, including climate control and motion sensors. Entity is developing security camera monitoring software to detect movement in the camera view and allow users (or monitoring agencies) to remotely view camera feeds over the network, dialing in, or over the Internet. This software will be supported by Hauppauge video equipment.

Serenity Systems intends to market this software as part of its Managed Client network. The first release will be targeted at consultants supporting small businesses. Future releases will scale up, supporting larger facilities with a distributed building automation implementation.

More information is available on the Serenity Systems Web site, www.serenity-systems.com.

Gotcha! 1.65

Thorsten Thielen's Gotcha! is a free "mailware" or "cardware" OS/2 screen capture program. Version 1.65 includes support for German and Brazilian Portuguese. A new option permits Gotcha! to run at idle priority.



For more info and download, visit www.informatik.uni-trier.de/CIP/thielen/gotcha.

Magician

Magician is an implementation of OpenGL for Java. Using Magician, programmers can write portable Java code that seamlessly uses existing native OpenGL libraries to provide high-performance rendering over a variety of platforms,

including OS/2, Unix, Win32, and Apple Macintosh. It's free for personal use; a one-system license is 100GBP (about \$60). Learn more at www.arcana.co.uk.

WarpCharge

Theta Band Software LLC released WarpCharge, a new product that enables Web sites to securely process credit card orders directly over the Internet.

WarpCharge is the first credit card processing software available for the OS/2 platform. WarpCharge provides the missing piece in your OS/2 e-commerce solution: the payment system.

WarpCharge comes with an extensive REXX interface that lets developers integrate credit card processing facility into any REXX-enabled OS/2 application, or into custom applications.

"Until now, merchants running secure web sites on IBM OS/2 Warp Server for e-business had no means to process payments online. They could accept online orders, but had to process the payment manually," said Julien Pierre, President of Theta Band Software. "Shoppers like to get their purchase immediately, and by processing credit card payments automatically and in real-time, WarpCharge enables that sort of instant gratification."

WarpCharge is not just for e-commerce. It can be used for nearly all types of businesses, whether you take credit card orders by mail, over the phone, or real-time over the Internet.

WarpCharge includes sample CGI scripts for use on any secure OS/2 Web server, so that you can start taking Internet orders immediately.

There are two editions of WarpCharge:

WarpCharge Business is for any business that needs to process credit cards over the phone, web, or in custom REXX applications. It costs \$299 per server.

WarpCharge for ISPs lets Internet Service Providers offer credit card processing capability to all their customers. It costs \$999 per server.

WarpCharge is available for purchase from Theta Band Software, www.thetaband.com. WarpCharge Business requires a PC running IBM OS/2 Warp 4, OS/2 Warp Server or OS/2 Warp Server for E-Business. In addition, WarpCharge for ISPs requires an OS/2 secure Web server program.

Memo Plus

Memo Plus is a utility for OS/2 users equipped with 3Com PalmPilot. BT Software's Memo Plus promises "everything your built-in Memo Pad is—and a whole lot more!"

Memo Plus lets you add drawings, start from a template, and set an alarm for a Memo. It provides multiple fonts for Palm OS/2 users. You can edit the memo title independent of the note contents.

The utility costs \$19.95. You can download Memo Plus for a free trial period at www.btsoftware.com/ppilot/memoplus.htm.

Virtual Pascal/2 2.0

fPrint UK released version 2.0 of Virtual Pascal/2. This Pascal development environment supports OS/2, Windows 9x/NT, and a number of 32-bit DOS extenders, with Linux support underway.

Virtual Pascal 2.0 has a 32-bit optimized compiler that is claimed to be fully Borland Pascal 7 compatible and largely Delphi 2 compatible and fully data type compatible with BP7 and Delphi. All Delphi 2 Object Pascal language extensions are included. The compiler generates standard OMF-compliant OBJ and LIB files, as well as standard ASM files that can be compiled with MASM or TASM. Even advanced features like Thread Local Storage and AnsiStrings generate standard assembler code, not requiring compiler "magic."

New in this version, Virtual Pascal is cross-platform capable; both compilers (OS/2 and Windows) can generate executables for both targets.

You have direct access to all OS/2 API functions, including 16 bit ones. No run-time DLLs or "thunk libraries" are required.

The built-in cross-platform linker can create native OS/2 LX as well as Win32 PE executables. It supports all OS/2 EXEPACK formats and compresses code, data, and resources.

Virtual Pascal's Integrated Development Environment (IDE) is very similar to Borland Pascal. In this version the IDE has support for OS/2 2.x, OS/2 Warp and Windows NT/Windows 95 (Win32).

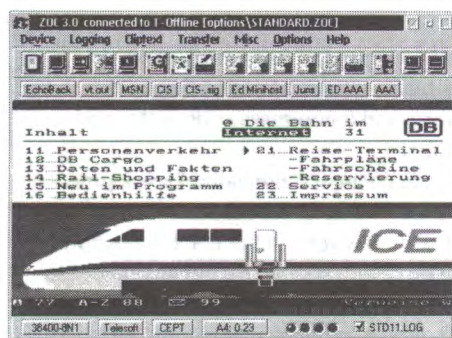
A fully integrated symbolic debugger, with functionality similar to Borland's Turbo Debugger, also works as a stand-alone debugger, capable of debugging stand-alone executables without source code.

You can extend the IDE and compiler to support more platforms or variants of existing targets. For example, it is possible to define an OWL target, a DPML target, or a Linux target and use these from the IDE. The IDE uses text-based .VPO (Virtual Pascal Options) files for defining projects.

The Run-Time Library has been extended to include a new unit, VpSysLow, which encapsulates and implements almost all platform-dependent calls. All units in the RTL, except WinCrt and parts of System, are independent of operating systems, using the functions published by VpSysLow instead of native API calls. Because dependency on the operating system has been isolated to the VpSysLow unit, the RTL works on both Win32 and OS/2. This also means that VP v2.0 can be ported to generate code for any Intel-based 32-bit platform like Linux, BeOS, etc, by porting the VpSysLow unit. Third parties are in the process of creating ports of VpSysLow for both Linux and DPML targets. Full source code for the entire system-independent RTL, including the VpSysLow and System units, is included in VP v2.0.

Virtual Pascal v2.0 can be purchased from BMT Micro for \$159. Lower pricing is available for students and for customers in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union.

Have a look at www.fprint.co.uk/products/virtual_pascal/vpascal.html.



ZOC v3.13

Emtec software released version ZOC version 3.13 for OS/2 and Windows. ZOC is a shareware telnet client, SSH client, and terminal emulator.

The program's home page is at www.emtec.com/zoc/index.html, and you can download it directly from www.emtec.com/download.html.

Go figure

Jim Howell wrote a few math programs that do arithmetic and factoring with large integers, and found links to a couple others. They're free for the downloading at www.netcom.com/~jrhowell/software.htm.

Fact does calculation with large integers, and implements the "try all divisors" method of finding factors.

Factor is a public domain program that successfully factors any number up to 80 digits; it will try with larger numbers, up to about 120 digits. It uses several different factoring methods.

Multimedia Pack for OS/2

Theta Band Software announced the Multimedia Pack for OS/2, a collection of utilities to enhance OS/2 multimedia.

MMCheck checks your MPM2/2 installation (i.e. MPM2.INI) for errors or suspicious settings. It reports any problems it finds.

MPU-401 Driver replaces IBM's MPU-401 driver, which is used as MIDI support for a number of sound cards, including sound cards that use the Crystal Semicon-

ductor drivers. Enhancements over IBM's driver include:

- fixes for Warp 3
- SMP compatibility
- better hardware compatibility
- DOS sharing
- RTMIDI recording without an IRQ

NPDSMI 2.0 is a plug-in for Netscape Navigator and Communicator for OS/2. This plug-in plays music module files embedded on Web pages. Module files are 32 channel digital music and are of tremendously high quality. This new version 2.0 of the DSMI Netscape plug-in supports compressed zip module files.

MMPack is \$35. More information is available at www.thetaband.com.

Visualizer for OS/2

ASTRAC's Visualizer for OS/2 is a tool to perform easy analysis of your company's DB2 and non-DB2 data. With Visualizer, you can run adhoc queries, then combine, consolidate, and analyse, using powerful integrated reporting and charting facilities.

A new version was released, for personal use. It has some restrictions on the data it can access, but is otherwise a fully-functional edition of Visualizer for OS/2. In the personal version, access to external data (such as Lotus Notes, AS/400, and mainframe MVS and VM products) is disabled.

However, the personal version does include all Visualizer components, such as query, charts, statistics, plans, procedures, and development.

The personal version is \$97, and is available from BMT Micro. You can get books and extras free from ASTRAC's Web site at www.astrac.com.

InnoVal and OS/2

InnoVal Systems Solutions, Inc. withdrew the following products from marketing and support:

- Post Road Mailer for OS/2
- J Street Mailer for Java
- Web Willy Watch for OS/2

However, Innoval made these applications

freely available from its online store at <http://stores.yahoo.com/innoval>. You may freely distribute executable copies of the software through online software repositories and Web sites.

If you distribute the Post Road Mailer you must also distribute a serial number to allow a user to activate the product. You may use a serial number you received in the past (for release 3.0), or you may use serial number 31571728. You may also post serial numbers in newsgroups and Web sites.

InnoVal president Dan Porter wrote, "For me, personally, this is a sad day. Our company tried to hang in as long as possible with OS/2. OS/2 is still my favorite platform and OS/2 customers are the best customers our company ever had. I have made many good friends through my associations with all of you. You'll still see me popping in at OS/2 users group meetings throughout the country when my travels coincide with a meeting.

"We are moving on to bigger things, but not better. OS/2 was better and (oh, how I wish) it could have been big."

Free Photo>Graphics

TrueSpectra ceased all updates/sales of Photo>Graphics (both OS/2 and Windows versions) as of January 1, 1999, in order to concentrate on server-side image applications. For TrueSpectra's explanation, see www.truespectra.com/photographics_1letter.html.

The good news is TrueSpectra has provided a downloadable version of Photo>Graphics Pro 2.02S at its support site, www.truespectra.com/support.html. The file is an unregistered 30-day trial copy, but if you send email to support@truespectra.com they say they'll send you a registration key to unlock it. ☺



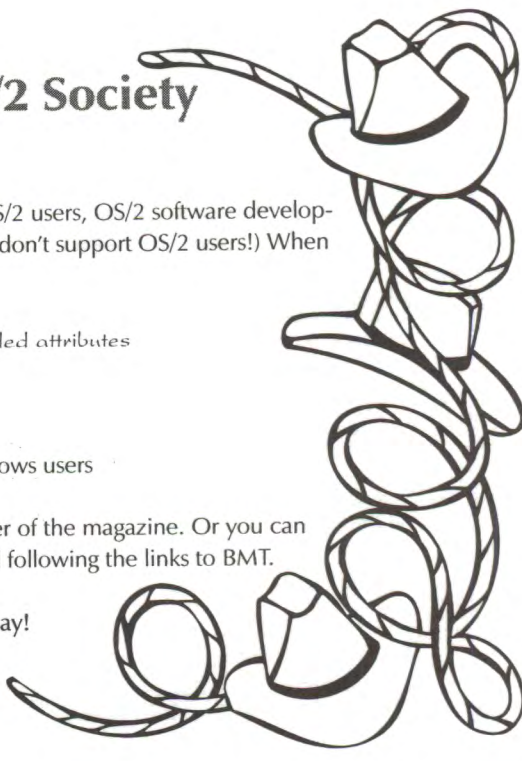
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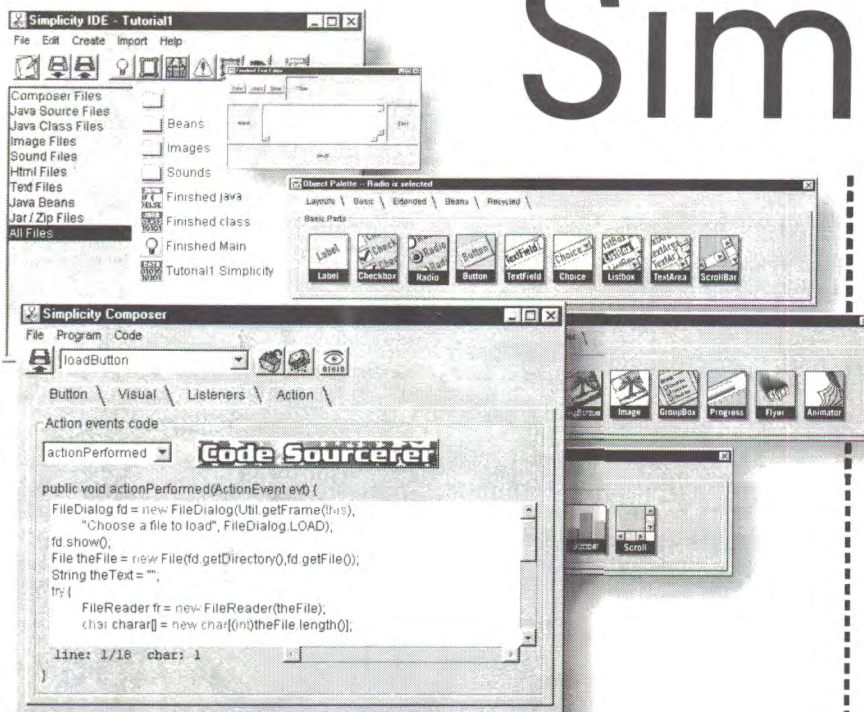
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